REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Official Action mailed December 31, 2003.

In the present paper, Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, 10, 11 and 22, has canceled claims 19-20 and has added claims 23 and 24. Claims 1-18 and 21-24 are now presented for the Examiner's consideration in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner's Objections

Applicant has amended claim 6 to correct the error in dependency pointed out by the Examiner in his objection, and to further correct an additional clerical error.

Formal drawings, together with a Letter to the Official Draftsperson, are submitted with this paper. Applicant believes that the formal drawings overcome the Examiner's objection in paragraph 5 of the Official Action relating to line definition and thickness. As to the Examiner's objection to the drawings set forth in paragraph 4 relating to the drawing element "504," that element number has been added to the Specification by amendment.

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract as being over 150 words. Applicant has submitted a shortened version of the Abstract herewith.

The Present Application

The present application is directed to a system and method for providing certified voice and multimedia mail. As the streaming packets that make up a voice mail message are received by a customer's premises equipment, that equipment compiles those packets into a return message. An electronic signature is then attached to that return message. The electronic

signature, coupled with the return message, can then be used to prove that the message was received by the customer, and to prove the contents of that message.

No system for certifying a voice message or a multimedia message had previously existed. No technique is currently available for certifying voice mail carried over the PSTN, and the present invention does not address that problem. The present invention instead takes advantage of the fact that voice messages are arriving more commonly at customers' premises over packetized networks. The presently described system assembles the streaming packets that comprise a voice message, and creates and signs a certification mail message.

For example, claim 1 is directed to a method for certifying electronic voice or multimedia messages. The method includes receiving a voice or multimedia message comprising a stream of digitized information packets. The digitized information packets are compiled into a mail message. An electronic signature is attached to the mail message to indicate that a message recipient received the mail message.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 6, 9-14, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,629,982 to Micali ("Micali"); has rejected claims 4, 5, 7 8 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Micali, and has rejected claims 19 and 20 under as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Micali in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,633,916 to Goldhagen et al. ("Goldhagen").

The Micali *Patent*

Micali discloses an electronic transaction system and method that includes a return-receipt method. The system is directed to transactions such as contract signing (col. 1, lines 23-28) and financial transactions (col. 2, line 6). Micali does not disclose the certification of any

communication that is transmitted as streaming media. Specifically, Micali does not teach or

suggest the certification of voice mail messages or multimedia messages that are transmitted

through a network as streamed packets.

The Goldhagen *Patent*

Goldhagen teaches a messaging system that uses a voice grade telephone line. In

discussing the architecture of the system, Goldhagen notes that "Unisys voice and facsimile

messaging systems can be implemented within a Client/Server architecture," and that "Mailbox

Client/Server architecture can be implemented as an extension of" that. Goldhagen never

suggests any security or certification for use with its messaging system or with any messaging

system.

Discussion

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 10 and 11 to comprise *a voice or*

multimedia system that includes a stream of digitized information packets. The claims further

require that the packets of that streaming message be compiled (claims 1 and 10) or packaged

(claim 11). By assembling the streaming packets that comprise the voice message, the system

and method of the invention creates a record of the overall message that is be certified to prove

that that actual message was received by the recipient.

Neither Micali nor Goldhagen teaches compiling streaming packets for certifying voice

or multimedia messages. As noted, Micali is directed to transactional messages such as are

found in contracts and financial transactions. The Examiner has pointed to the following passage

of Micali as teaching digitized packets:

11

●   ●

> In the preferred embodiment, an extended certified mail system is
> provided using a single "trusted" party. The system is
> implemented in a computer network, although it should be realized
> that telephone, fax, broadcast or other communication networks
> may be used. Thus, without limitation, it is assumed that each user
> in the system has a computer capable of sending and receiving
> messages to and from other computers via proper communication
> channels.

(Micali, col. 4, lines 58-65). Applicant understands the Examiner to be positing that the step of

"compiling the stream of digitized information packets" of claim 1 (for example) is taught by the

re-assembly of packets at a destination in an IP or other packet-based network. That concept,

however, does not teach the compiling of voice packets arriving in a *stream*, which requires

techniques beyond standard transport-layer mechanics. Applicant therefore submits that none of

the references cited by the Examiner teaches compiling a stream of voice packets.

The Examiner further combines Goldhagen with Micali to teach certifying voice or

multimedia mail. The Examiner states that Micali teaches the use of "use of his invention for

telephone, fax, broadcast or other communication networks," and that Goldhagen discloses a

voice messaging system with PC-based applications. The Examiner argues that the two would

be combined to "enable Windows/PC-based applications to perform all the functions currently

available to telephone-based NAP Voice and Facsimile subscribers." Applicant submits that

simply making functions described in one reference available to users of another reference is not

generally motivation to combine them. The Examiner offers no suggestion that those functions

would be beneficial, for example, to Windows applications.

Applicant therefore submits that, for those reasons, the independent claims 1, 10 and 11 of the present application, together with the dependent claims, which incorporate the same limitations, are patentable over Micali and Goldhagen.

Applicant submits that claims 21 and 22 are patentable for the additional reason that no cited reference teaches originating a communication session from an off-line device. In the passage cited by the Examiner, Micali (col. 4, lines 59-62) teaches, at most, that his system may be implemented *in a telephone network*. That passage in no way suggests that a communications originate in an off-line device.

Applicant has added claims 23 and 24 claiming the additional step of removing headers from packets before packaging them together. That step is performed to create contiguous voice files for certification purposes. There is no suggestion in the cited art to perform that step.

Conclusion

Applicant therefore respectfully asserts that all the claims in the case are now in condition for allowance, and earnestly requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present case, the Examiner should

not hesitate in contacting the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

By_____

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